(6)

REFLECTIONS

ON THE FORMATION OF

A REGENCY.

IN

A LETTER

TO

A MEMBER OF THE LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

Ardua privatos neſcit fortuna penates;
Et regnum cum luce dedit cognata poteſtas,
Excepit Tyrio venerabile pignus in Oſtro;
Luſtravitque TUOS, aquilis victricibus ortus
Miles.———

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MAY

REFLECTIONS, &c.

SIR,

AS you were pleaſed to expreſs your opinion, that ſome obſervations on the preſent criſis, urged in our converſation of yeſterday, were not deſtitute of weight, I ſhall make no apology for addreſſing them to you in ſuch a form, as a few hours ſtolen from occupations and diſtractions have enabled me to throw them together. Whatever may be their merit, nothing can be more certain, than that the moſt mature deliberation is the duty of every member of either houſe of parliament on this occaſion.

Not to name motives, of which, would to heaven virtue could as powerfully counteract the influence, as decency forbids the mention, it is in ſuch a queſtion, unworthy a good man to abandon his conduct to the guidance of impreſſions that ariſe from the ſeductive eloquence, the tumultuous and deſultory reaſonings of debate.

Thoſe who affect not to forgive the members of any numerous aſſembly (pardon me if I do not except the Engliſh parliaments) for ſometimes permitting foreign circumſtances to mix with argument, in its entrance into their underſtanding; for ſometimes ſuffering political enmity to increaſe the difficulty, and political partiality to relax the vigilance of their judgment, approve themſelves aſſuredly more rigorous than wiſe. In the ordinary occurrences of government, ſuch a conduct, though never juſtifiable, may be deemed venial.

But if a queſtion ſhould ariſe for the diſcuſſion of parliament, in the deciſion of which were involved the peace and majeſty of the empire, the health and immortality of the conſtitution; it is not unſuſpected purity alone, it is not ſlightly yielded conviction, it is not tranſient enquiry and indolent acquieſcence that will acquit an honeſt man in the diſcharge of his duty to his country, to his conſcience, to his poſterity!—No! reflection and reſearch are not leſs ſacredly impoſed on him by his truſt, than uprightneſs and probity. He that is warmly intereſted, will ſeduloufly enquire. To neglect, is to betray; and the man who feels not an intereſt ſufficient to rouſe him from negligence, can hardly be inacceſſible to temptations which will ſeduce him into improbity.

bity. Such a caſe, Sir, is the preſent. A glance at the aſpect of affairs demonſtrates it. Of the monarch, and of his malady, no man ſpeaks with more ſincere reverence and ſorrow than myſelf. I know the duty that I owe to the perſon of the ſupreme magiſtrate.—I am not inſenſible to the reſpect which is conciliated by the purity of his manners, the mild and amiable virtues of his private life. The tears of his people, form the nobleſt eulogy of the ſovereign and his ſubjects. The memory of a diſmembered empire, of unpopular adminiſtrations, of a gloomy and diſaſtrous reign, have been baniſhed from their generous minds, by the ſenſibilities of afflicted loyalty.

I ſpeak thus, becauſe my opinion on this ſubject, is not ſhaken by certain profligate ſcribblers, whoſe audacity deprives them of any title to the amneſty which their inſignificance might have claimed; who, inſulting and outraging at once, the father and the ſon, have been wicked enough to inſinuate, what they have not been frontleſs enough to aſſert, that it is not the virtues and the calamity of the ſovereign, but the apprehended miſgovernment of his ſucceſſor, that clouds every countenance, and ſaddens every heart. Time was, when ſorrow and reverence would have forbidden any good man to probe the wounds of

amiable and exalted perſonages, by rude and unſeaſonable diſcuſſion. But that time is paſt. Conſiderations which ſuperſede faſtidious decorums, and controul the keeneſt feelings, render, reſerve criminal.—The life of princes, born and elevated for their ſubjects, muſt ſometimes endure an exploring light, which rarely pierces the obſcurity of inferior men. Let me then remind you, Sir, that a month has nearly elapſed ſince the nature of the royal malady has abandoned this empire to a ſtate which poſſeſſes the character, and is prevented only by our manners from exhibiting the effects, of anarchy.

The influence that animates and preſides over the functions of executive government, is withdrawn. That name, equally indiſpenſible to the regularity of the moſt ordinary legal tranſaction, and to the ſolemnity of the higheſt national act, can now ſcarcely be uſed without abſurdity. The legiſlative aſſembly find themſelves in a predicament ſo novel, that there exiſts no lawful authority which can either ſanction, or delay, their convention. The volume of the laws is mute and impotent, ſince the voice that promulgated, and the hand that enforced them, is ſilent and inert:---the aſpect which the majeſty of the empire preſents to foreign nations, is eclipſed:---

inſults

inſults may be offered to our flag, depredations committed on our commerce, wars may be commenced, and alliances concluded, the moſt hoſtile to our intereſt; while England has no arm that can wield her power, to aſſert her dignity, or avenge her wrongs. No vacancy that ariſes in any ſubordinate department of government, can be filled. There is no authority that can interpoſe between the unbending rigour of the laws, and the life of a devoted criminal, which perhaps equity and mercy ought to have preſerved.

In ſuch a conjuncture you will pardon me, Sir, if I cannot think with you, that there can be any ſerious intention to procraſtinate the final arrangement of a ſtable government. On the account of the phyſicians, parliament will rely. An air of myſtery and conſtraint has hitherto hung over their reports; but appealed to on ſo ſolemn an occaſion, theſe eminent and reſpectable perſons will ſacrifice inferior punctilios, to national intereſt and truth. It is ſcarcely to be imagined that any attempt will be hazarded of practiſing on the loyalty, or abuſing the delicacy of the parliament or people, for purpoſes of ſiniſter ambition.—What diſguiſe indeed could be more thin than that which muſt be aſſumed by ſuch deſigns? What ſophiſtry leſs ſpecious than what muſt

muſt be urged in their behalf? Should heaven ſpeedily reſtore our ſovereign to the prayers of his people, would he feel much gratitude to thoſe who would, even for a week, ſacrifice the ſlighteſt intereſt of England, to an idle parade of reverential deference? But ſhould his reſtoration to us be, in truth, remote and doubtful, what language could afford terms of execration commenſurate with the guilt of the man who ſhould plead for the continuance of this ſtate of anarchy, or propoſe the wretched remedy of a feeble and fluctuating government? It will not ſurely be urged by any one, that the ſilence of the law, withdraws this caſe from the paramount authority of parliament;—the exigence of the occaſion, the confidence and expectation of the people tacitly and virtually devolve on that aſſembly the right of guarding the commonwealth from injury.

The eſtates of parliament have in all former times, remedied the evils that might ariſe from the minority, incapacity, or deſertion of the monarch; and whether they are denominated a convention, or a parliament, they will now exerciſe the ſame right,

Veſtræ faciem cognoſcite turbæ,
Cunctaque juſſuri primum hoc decernite patres,
Quod regnis populeſque liquet, VOS eſſe ſenatum.

Aſſuming

Aſſuming therefore the competency ultimately to decide, and the expediency ſpeedily to determine, this queſtion the moſt grave and momentous that has ariſen in England ſince the revolution, it remains to conſider, whether, during the royal indiſpoſition, the executive government ought to be entruſted to a ſingle perſon, or to a council of regency? A diſcuſſion of ſuch intricacy will produce variety of opinion;—an object of ſuch magnitude will involve variety of intereſt; neither, therefore, the impulſe of conviction, nor the ſeduction of ſecret views, will ſuffer us to expect unanimity. From a ſolitude and an obſcurity never cheered by the ſmile of greatneſs, nor pierced by the din of faction, I preſume to offer my ſentiments with the freedom of an honeſt man, with the calmneſs and diffidence of a citizen remote from power.

I lament with you, Sir, the neceſſity of any appeal to general reaſoning. It is a mode of deciſion full of difficulty and hazard, which unveils the *ſanctum ſanctorum* of government, betrays to the eye of the people its nakedneſs and infirmity, and demonſtrates to them, with perilous evidence, that its ſanctity depends only on their reverence and credulity. But in the abſence of

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precedent*, (for the precedents of rude ages and violent governments, are inapplicable to moderate governments, to civil and peaceable times;) we muſt appeal to the genius of the conſtitution, and to the general maxims of political reaſoning.

An argument of infinite force for entruſting the vicarious power to a ſingle perſon, is the facility and ſimplicity of the expedient.

The circumſtances which mould the character, and affect the actions of men, are cauſes of which it is far more difficult to eſtimate the force, to diſcover the combination, and to predict the effects, than the powers which operate on material objects. It is hence, that the complexity and refinement of political machinery, have ever defeated its purpoſes, by rendering its movements independent of our controul, and their conſequences eluſive of our conjecture. Simple expedients, therefore, which imitate the practice, or adopt the analogy of eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, have in all nations been choſen by the wiſeſt men. To the preſent caſe, this conſideration applies in its full force. One royal perſon, repreſenting

* The precedents of regencies which exiſt in the Engliſh hiſtory, will afterwards be conſidered in another point of view.

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the dignity, and exerciſing the functions of royalty, accords with the maxims and uſages of the conſtitution. The name of regent, while that magiſtrate poſſeſſes the plenitude of kingly power, ſcarcely innovates on the moſt frivolous form. From this ſyſtem, no novel ſituation, no hitherto undecided queſtion would ariſe. Laws, cuſtoms, prejudices, without difficulty, adapt themſelves to it. The "*mores inſtitutaque majorum*", thoſe bulwarks of public peace and ſtable government, remain unimpaired. An opportunity is indeed, on this occaſion, preſented to us, of bequeathing an inheritance of tranquillity to ſucceeding generations. If ever ſuch a calamity as the preſent ſhould befall the empire, the example of this parliament will be appealed to as a precedent; and it is in their choice, whether they will abandon their ſucceſſors to the factions and intrigues that attend the formation of a regency, or by ſanctioning the rights of the heir apparent, ſuffer the exerciſe of royalty to devolve as peaceably on him during the incapacity, as at the demiſe of the monarch. Our poſterity will thus by one wiſe and ſimple meaſure, be reſcued for ever from the dread even of the ſhorteſt interruption of government, from the ambition of powerful ſubjects, and the ſhock of contending factions. Is not the embarraſſment

 which

which is now experienced in ſettling the government, the moſt powerful argument to ſave future parliaments, on ſimilar occaſions, from a like ſtate of diſtraction? Views of men, and of affairs, preciſely the ſame, have determined ſober ſpeculators in their ſyſtems, and prudent ſtateſmen in their conduct, to prefer hereditary monarchy, to more ſpecious and abſtractly reaſonable forms.

But it is not alone its ſimplicity, or its tendency to public tranquillity, that pleads for this expedient. The affection and reverence of the people would be attracted by thoſe circumſtances of rank and extraction in the regent, which ſo powerfully conciliate the attachment and faſcinate the imagination of the multitude. Inſtead of yielding a cold ſubmiſſion to the mandates of the law, ſpoken by the voice of regents, the ſenſe of duty would be animated by ſentiments of devotion and loyalty to their prince. Theſe uſeful and generous prejudices, the auxiliaries of patriotiſm and reaſon, are confirmed by the guarded exterior, the ſolemn plauſibilities that impoſe on the fancy, and hide from the keeneſs of human diſcernment the impotency of ſovereign power. The partition of authority, the elevation of ſubjects would diſſipate this illuſion;

luſion; but the princely youth, born in the purple, and educated to a throne, could, without violence, aſſume the ſtate, the ſplendors, and the terrors of majeſty.

> Ardua privatos neſcit fortuna penates,
> Et regnum cum luce dedit cognata poteſtas.
> Excepit Tyrio venerabile pignus in oſtro,
> Luſtravitque TUOS Aquilis victricibus ortus,
> Miles.———

Let the viſionary contemn the groſſneſs, and the ſophiſt deride the ſimplicity of ſuch modes of argument; men, who are initiated in habits of more correct thought, will remark the different effect of novelties in ſciences and in ſtates, will diſcriminate between the boldneſs of abſtract reaſon and the gravity of civil wiſdom, and reſpect the principles which have hitherto directed, and muſt ever continue to govern the affairs of men.

The inſtitution of a council of regency, is an expedient which involves diſcuſſions of far more intricacy and peril. Formed, as it probably would be, of princes of the blood, of the chief perſons of the church and the law, there muſt be blended in them the diſcordant and heterogeneous characters of regents, miniſters, and ſenators. Regents, from whoſe dignity miniſterial reſpon-

reſponſibility muſt derogate; miniſters, whom the dignity of regency muſt tend to exempt from reſponſibility; ſenators, on whom the truſt of ſovereign power muſt either beſtow influence inconſiſtent with equality, or impoſe ſilence inconſiſtent with duty; the prerogatives of this council would be ſubverſive of the moſt eſtabliſhed uſages, and hoſtile to the moſt ſacred maxims of the conſtitution. The ſpirit of our government which, while it inſpires affection and reverence for the monarch, dictates the moſt vigilant jealouſy of his miniſters, would, by ſuch an accumulation and confuſion of powers, be violated and enfeebled. If two ideas were to be ſelected, the moſt repugnant to its theory, they would be royal reſponſibility and miniſterial impunity; the one, becauſe it is injurious to public tranquillity; the other, becauſe it is injurious to public freedom; the one, as a precedent only to be found in the moſt turbulent; the other in the moſt corrupt and ſervile times: the latter it has, by its doctrines and practice, branded; the former it has ſilently abandoned to the dominion of thoſe emergencies where oppreſſion awakens the feelings, and reſtores the rights of nature. Yet, to break down this ſacred barrier, to render the accuſation of a ſovereign more light, and the conviction of a

miniſter

miniſter more difficult, is the manifeſt operation of this ſyſtem. In every well organized polity, there are latent peculiarities of ſtructure which are only diſcoverable by their effects; and even when we cannot, in ſpeculation, nicely diſcriminate between the prerogatives of magiſtracies, experience has demonſtrated the ill effects of their confuſion. It is by the ſlow and ſilent abſorption of ſeparated powers, that the ſervants of every free people have become their lords. It was thus that the vital principles of the Roman commonwealth were wounded in the union of conſular and tribunitian powers, by the crafty uſurper who ſubverted its freedom. And this was the feature of his policy that appeared the moſt prominent to the great maſter of political wiſdom. "*Conſulem ſe ferens, et ad tuendam plebem, tri-*
"*bunicio jure contentum; inſurgere paulatim, munia*
"*ſenatus, magiſtratuum, legum, in ſe trahere.*"

But to return from theſe generalities, which you may perhaps think obvious to one claſs of readers, and repulſive to another, let us contemplate a new aſpect of this oligarchical council.

Depoſitaries of royal authority, and poſſeſſors of miniſterial influence, uniting ſomewhat of the ſanctity of the ſupreme magiſtracy, to the activity and verſatility of miniſters, to their weight

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as noblemen, and their eloquence as ſenators, the power of its members would be formidable, becauſe being difficult to define, it muſt be hard to limit or reſiſt. The ſyſtematic oppoſition which has been made in England to the executive power, certainly ariſes from the perpetual intereſt which every man feels to reſiſt that which is placed beyond the reach of his ambition. The regents, elevated above the condition of ſubjects for a time, like the annual magiſtrates of republics, might, in the intoxication of authority, forget its period, and hazard every expedient to extend it. Againſt the prerogative of the crown, we have for centuries been erecting bulwarks, and the analogy of a royal regent is perfect; but of their force againſt a council, we have no experience; and analogy will not juſtify confidence in them. Uniting ſo many characters, their pretentions in one, would diſguiſe their deſigns in another; ſlight conceſſions in one capacity, would amuſe the people, while formidable attacks were made in another, and in the combination of ſuch various forces, the ſource of danger might be diſcovered only by fatal experience. Aſſuming the ſhapes of Proteus, ſuch a government might elude the arm of Hercules. The undiſciplined defenders of popular rights,

purſuing

purſuing their enemies into their faſtneſſes, are waylaid and ſurrounded by inſidious and inviſible foes, whom they can neither diſtinguiſh, or eſcape. Their fall is dark and inglorious; and the prayer of Ajax,—"give me but light, ye Gods!" may be ejaculated by the agony and anguiſh of expiring freedom.

That the unity and prominence of the executive power, by rendering it eaſy to diſcern and reſiſt its encroachments on public liberty, is one advantage which England poſſeſſes over other free nations, has been demonſtrated with great ingenuity by M. De Lolme, in the ſecond chapter of the ſecond book of his work. You, who are no ſtranger to my ſentiments of that performance, may perhaps wonder at my quoting it with unqualified applauſe; but beſides the juſtneſs of his reflections, they are addreſſed with peculiar propriety to the adherents of our preſent miniſter, who, in the memorable conteſt of 1784, appealed to the authority of M. De Lolme, with ſuch confidence and ſo much exultation*.

"The indiviſibility of the public power in "England," ſays he, "has conſtantly kept the "views and efforts of the people directed to one

* Vide Pulteney's tract on Mr. Fox's Eaſt India Bill.

and

" and the ſame object; and the permanence of
" that power has alſo given a permanence and
" regularity to the precautions they have taken
" to reſtrain it. Conſtantly turned towards that
" ancient fortreſs, the royal power, they have
" made it for ſeven centuries, the object of their
" fear: with a watchful jealouſy they have con-
" ſidered all its parts—they have obſerved all
" its outlets,—they have even pierced the earth
" to explore its ſecret avenues and ſubterraneous
" works; united in their views, by the greatneſs
" of the danger, they have regularly formed
" their attacks.—To ſay all in three words, the
" executive power is formidable, but it is for
" ever the ſame; its reſources are vaſt, but their
" nature is at length known; it has been made
" the indiviſible and inalienable attribute of one
" perſon alone; but then all other perſons, of
" whatever rank or degree, are really intereſted
" to deſtrain it within proper bounds."

Every feature of this deſcription, would find its contraſt in the portrait of a divided regency; yet, the principles which render the preſervation of the executive power indiviſible, a maxim fundamental in our government, operate with equal force, whether it be adminiſtered by a regent or a king. It is not alone the vulgar advantages of

monarchy.

monarchy; energy, ſecrecy, and the abſence of faction that are obtained by the unity of this power. It is ſubſervient to nobler ends; and by the wonderful mechaniſm of our conſtitution, monarchical forms are exhibited as the higheſt refinement of a republican government. Let it not be conceited, that our danger is imaginary, becauſe the period of this regency may be ſhort. What duration the councils of Providence ſhall aſſign to it, who can predict? The labour of deſtruction is eaſy, and its progreſs rapid. A few years, perhaps, and our boaſted commonwealth may be numbered among the governments that cover the earth; the awful ruins of edifices, once conſecrated to the rights and to the happineſs of human kind. The ſacred flame kindled on the altar of freedom, by the genius of our conſtitution, of which the kings of England (let the lords of ſlaves "hide their diminiſhed heads,") are the choſen high prieſts, may, in a moment, be extinguiſhed for ever, by the officious rudeneſs of unhallowed hands.

The inſtitution of ſuch a regency would, moreover, not only be deſtructive of the unity, but dangerous to the independence of the executive power. It is remote from the preſent deſign, to mix in the broils of contending parties; but the elevation of

any miniſter above the conſtitutional powers of the crown, ought to be firmly reſiſted by every virtuous and enlightened citizen. It is however too obvious to eſcape remark, that a council of regency, formed as it is likely to be, would become an inſtrument in the hands of the preſent cabinet, to aggrandize and perpetuate its power. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe the chancellor diveſted of all partiality to his political connexions. It were to expect a perfection or a depravity, to which humanity rarely either riſes or ſinks. The ſacred character of the prelate, the prudent and amiable abſtraction from politics that has hitherto diſtinguiſhed the royal conſort, will not ſuffer us to expect much activity from them: but the gratitude of the prelate, the natural and laudable partiality of the queen to the miniſters, and meaſures of her huſband, muſt determine their ſide. On the throne, no Engliſh ſubject has hitherto fixed the engines of his ambition; but having obtained this point from which to play his machinery, what revolutions and concuſſions may not our political *Archimedes* command?

In a few years of ſuch authority, the miniſters, and *their* regents, might fortify themſelves ſo inexpugnably with official and parliamentary intereſt, that at its termination, they might ſecurely

hold

hold their ſtations without the confidence of the ſovereign, or the affection of the people; ſmile at the cries of an oppreſſed nation, and defy the exertions of a trammeled monarch.

This view addreſſes itſelf, not only to the judgment, but to the conſiſtency of our miniſter. It is to him an *argumentum ad hominem*; it was by attributing ſuch conſequences to the India Bill, of Mr. Fox, that the people of England were ſeduced, in a moment of intoxication and inſanity, to drive from the ſenate and the cabinet their moſt tried and ancient friends. It was as the champion of thoſe principles which I now maintain, that the ſmiles of the ſovereign, and the acclamations of the people, conducted Mr. Pitt to that eminence, where the eyes of Europe are now fixed on him:—let him approve the purity of his motives, by the ſteadineſs of his conduct.

There is one peculiarity in our government deſerving of ſpecial remark, which ariſes from the independence of the crown, and the precarious tenure of miniſterial power. The perfection of a free government, is, when political acts, though they depend on the popular will, are yet produced by it circuitouſly and unconſciouſly; when forms and *orders* interpoſed, hide from the eyes of the people their own authority; and when the

violence of their reſolution is broken by the numerous and complex ſprings to which it muſt give energy before it go forth into action.—In other words, that free government is the beſt, where popular influence is the greateſt, and popular prerogative, the leaſt.

To reſtrain the overgrown power of a citizen, and to call forth all men's abilities in the ſervice of the ſtate, the ancient republics had recourſe to an *oſtraciſm* or *petaliſm*, or to a rotation of magiſtracies. But this was to remove every barrier that reſiſts the madneſs of the multitude. Theſe rude contrivances of youthful legiſlation, find no place in the Engliſh ſyſtem. The abſence of ſuch odious and diſorderly expedients, is compenſated by the ſilent activity of ſituation and opinion.

A long adminiſtration has ever become unpopular in England. It creates diſcontent in the body of the nation. A formidable oppoſition in parliament continually gathers ſtrength, and the king is at laſt compelled to abandon the obnoxious miniſter *. This is the Engliſh *oſtraciſm*.—

* This progreſs will be the ſame, whether the adminiſtration be proſperous or calamitous. Proſperity begets inſolent confidence; calamity unreaſonable complaint. Sir Robert Walpole and Lord North, are examples.

The

The leaders of oppoſition are miniſters; in their turn become unpopular, and are expelled from the cabinet, by new opponents: ſuch is our rotation of magiſtracies. But if any body of men ſhould acquire ſuch permanence and power as we havebeen conſidering, the prerogative of the crown, the organ by which the voice of the parliament and people removes a miniſter, would be ſilenced by an authority that controuled the throne. Theſe regents may return his ſceptre to the monarch an impotent and gaudy bauble.

And what, Sir, is to be the influence of this new ſyſtem on our foreign politics? A government, temporary from its nature, and divided from its origin, counteracted by a powerful oppoſition, perhaps in the confidence of ſome of its members, is the picture of an inſtitution deviſed for diſtraction, feebleneſs, and contempt. I ſay, divided from its origin, becauſe who can wiſh that the blood which flows in the veins of the royal houſe of England, were ſo cold and vapid, that our prince could feel much cordiality towards men who had degraded him with frittered authority, and attempted to amuſe him with the ſemblance and mockery of power.

But

But it has been rumoured in certain circles, from high authority, that it is in contemplation with the miniſter, not indeed to deny the prince of Wales the regency, but to limit his power. This I preſume either means that they deſign to render the conſent of a council neceſſary to the exertion of certain prerogatives as in the regency-acts of the laſt and preſent reign, or that it is their intention, during the preſent regency, to ſuſpend altogether the exertion of ſome branches of prerogative.

You will agree with me, Sir, that we have anticipated the conſideration of both theſe plans; for the one is ſubverſive of the *unity*, the other hoſtile to the *independence* of the executive power. To call the firſt a limitation, is a groſs confuſion and abuſe of language. The royal authority, as it is poſſeſſed by the regent and council together, is not by ſuch a plan limited. Its exerciſe by the regent is limited, only becauſe it is divided between him and the council. It is not therefore limitation, but diviſion. The regent, and his council, would be nearly in the ſame ſtate as the king and ſenate of Sweden were, and the king and permanent council of Poland now are; and feeble and factious oligarchy is ſubſtituted for monarchy. The infallible effect, though we truſt

truſt it cannot in the moſt remote view be the object of the ſecond ſort of limitation ſuggeſted, is to elevate a miniſterial junto on the ruins of prerogative and freedom. The event of any political conteſt in England, would, after the adoption of ſuch a ſyſtem, ceaſe to be dubious. Unarmed with the ſame engine of prerogative to ſubvert, which miniſters had employed to ſtrengthen their power, the regent muſt be worſted in every conflict;—uncompreſſed by a ſuperior hand, their influence, under ſuch a regency, would riſe to a height which the *ordinary* prerogatives of the crown, when reſtored to the king, would be unable to reduce; the monarchical authority, palſied by inactivity and reſtraint, would ſhrink into impotence, and the beauty and vigour of the conſtitution, be blaſted and unnerved.

But * to what end, you may juſtly demand, in the cauſe of ſuch obvious truth, is any oſtentatious expenditure of argument? What,--might a ſtranger, ignorant of our diviſions, naturally exclaim,—What are the demerits of this prince,

* I had deſigned here to have diſcuſſed the precedents of regencies in our hiſtory, but that ſubject hasbeen exhauſted by a writer of great ability and conſtitutional information, in ſeveral papers, under the title of *The Proſpect Before Us*, publiſhed in the Herald, Gazetteer, General Advertiſer, &c.

whom,

whom, to exclude from power, a nation, indulgent to youth, and affectionate to royalty, is about to outrage every maxim of their fathers? Did he catch in the atmoſphere of a court, tainted as it is with the contagion of ſervility and deceit, thoſe artificial manners, that elaborate hypocriſy, that mean propenſity to deſpotiſm, that devotion to obſcure and worthleſs minions, that ſo early poiſon, and ſo fatally debaſe the minds of princes? No! He ſtooped not to paraſites or tools in his court, or his houſhold: —he ſought for friends among the chiefs of the nobles and the leaders of the people. The abilities of thoſe illuſtrious perſons whoſe intimacy he has cultivated, are the vouchers of his conſcious elevation of talent; for littleneſs crouches and trembles before the proud and impoſing ſuperiority of genius. He did not learn his maxims of politics in the antichamber or the cloſet; he imbibed them in the air of the HOUSE OF COMMONS. Magnificent and accompliſhed, nature formed him for a king; his generoſity fits him to be the ruler of a free, his abilities to be the ſovereign of a great, people. And what are the faults which are ſaid "to tarniſh the luſtre, and "to impede the march of theſe abilities?" I was about to enumerate their falſhoods, but I will not,

not. I bluſh for my country—I bluſh for this renowned and generous nation, whoſe voice has been aped and counterfeited by impudent and calumnious hirelings.

Some perſons have urged the difficulty of a voluntary abdication of power, and the temptation of the regent to retain it beyond the period of royal imbecility. They deceive themſelves, by arguing from the hiſtory of ages, when the ſlighteſt change was ominous of uſurpation and war; and they forget, that in our days, the energy of manners is equivalent to a thouſand ſtatutory enactments. Let the guardianſhip of the royal perſon be, however, ſeparated from the office of regency, and let the reſources of legiſlation be exhauſted to enſure the recovered monarch an eaſy and ſpeedy reſtoration.

For what purpoſe then, is the dignity of the heir apparent to be wounded, the majeſty of the executive power impaired, the freedom of our conſtitution endangered?——TO PRESERVE AND PERPETUATE THE ADMINISTRATION OF MR. PITT!

To ſuch an argument I ſhall not preſume to reply; and I can only add, that

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

London, Dec. 3, 1788.

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